

Sigma 28–300mm f/3.5–6.3 AF: Small, light, less pricey



SPECIFICATIONS: 28–300mm (30.68–286.48mm tested), f/3.5–6.3 (f/3.89–6.24 tested), 15 elements in 13 groups. Focusing turns 40 degrees counterclockwise. Zoom ring turns 90 degrees clockwise. Focal lengths marked at 28-, 35-, 50-, 70-, 100-, 200-, and 300mm. **Diagonal view angle:** 75–8 degrees. **Weight:** 1 lb. **Filter size:** 62mm. **Mounts:** Canon AF, Minolta AF, Nikon AF, Pentax AF, and Sigma AF. **Included:** lens hood. **List price:** \$324. **Street price:** Approx. \$250.

What you should know: Using more low-dispersion glass and aspherics, Sigma has reduced 28mm length by ¼-inch, filter size from 67mm to 62mm, lens elements by four, weight by 5 ounces, approx. street price by \$50, and improved SQF data slightly at almost all focal lengths. Specs are very close to Tamron's rival 28–300mm, which weighs one ounce less. Tamron's price remains higher at this writing.

Hands on: Satin-black barrel finish with convenient and grippable rubberized, studded zooming and focusing rings. Sliding lock at 28mm to prevent lens from extending requires a fingernail but really isn't necessary since zooming mechanism is well-damped and doesn't move accidentally. Autofocusing is swift, thanks to short distance-scale movement. Extending double-helical zoom is reasonably smooth with some additional pressure needed from 100–300mm. Zoom focal length markings in white are large and legible. Feet and meters on manual-focusing ring are both in white and could be confusing. White magnification-ratio figures for zoom ranges are very useful.

In the lab: SQF data at 28mm and 100mm was excellent, good at 200mm and 300mm. There was considerable bar-

rel distortion at 28mm (2.1%), considerable pincushion at 100mm (2.5%) and 200mm (2.6%), plus slight pincushion (0.6%) at 300mm.

At the closest focusing distance of 16.75 inches at 28mm (1:11.8), center sharpness was excellent at all apertures. Corner sharpness was poor f/3.5–5.6, very good at f/8, excellent f/11–16, and very good at f/22. Optimum performance was at f/11.

At close-focus of 20.25 inches at 100mm (1:5.2), center sharpness was excellent f/5.6–16 and very good f/22–32. Corner sharpness was poor f/22–32. Optimum performance was at f/32.

At close-focus of 21.25 inches at 200mm (1:3.7), center sharpness was very good at f/5.6, excellent f/8–16, very good at f/22, and good at f/38. Corner sharpness was poor f/5.6–11 and acceptable f/16–38. Optimum performance was at f/22.

At close-focus of 21 inches at 300mm (1:3.26), center sharpness was excellent f/5.6–8, good at f/11, and poor f/16–38. Corner sharpness was poor f/5.6–16 and acceptable f/22–38. Optimum performance was at f/22.

In the field: Test slides were very sharp and contrasty from center to corners in every aperture and focal length except at f/38, which exhibited softness at both 200mm and 300mm focal lengths. Light falloff at edges was gone by f/5.6 at 28mm and by f/8 at 100-, 200-, and 300mm.

Conclusion: Like all the extended 28–200mm and 28–300mm zooms, convenience far exceeds highest optical performance compared to the best short zooms and single focal lengths. Close focusing of flat objects leaves much to be desired. But for fun, convenience, and travel, the Sigma 28–300mm may be the best bargain of the lot.

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@28mm

Size	5x7	8x10	11x14	16x20	20x24
3.5	96.3	95.2	92.6	87.4	81.1
5.6	96.5	95.4	92.9	88.0	82.2
8.0	96.4	95.3	92.8	87.9	82.0
11.0	96.2	95.1	92.3	87.0	80.5
16.0	96.2	95.0	92.2	86.7	80.0
22.0	95.6	94.2	91.0	84.8	77.0

@100mm

Size	5x7	8x10	11x14	16x20	20x24
5.6	98.0	97.3	94.8	88.4	81.4
8.0	98.2	97.7	95.4	89.1	81.6
11.0	97.8	97.1	94.3	87.1	78.6
16.0	97.0	95.6	91.1	81.4	71.6
22.0	96.9	95.7	91.5	83.1	74.3
32.0	96.8	95.6	91.4	82.5	72.2

@200mm

Size	5x7	8x10	11x14	16x20	20x24
5.6	94.2	90.9	81.1	67.0	57.5
8.0	94.3	91.3	82.1	68.4	58.8
11.0	94.1	90.8	81.0	66.3	55.8
16.0	93.3	89.5	77.8	60.6	49.1
22.0	93.5	89.8	78.3	61.8	51.0
38.0	93.6	90.0	79.1	62.6	50.4

@300mm

Size	5x7	8x10	11x14	16x20	20x24
5.6	94.4	90.5	77.0	55.6	47.0
8.0	95.0	91.5	79.6	60.9	50.9
11.0	95.2	91.9	80.8	62.8	52.4
16.0	94.6	90.6	76.6	56.0	44.7
22.0	95.0	91.6	79.9	61.6	53.8
38.0	95.2	91.9	80.6	62.7	50.2

SUBJECTIVE QUALITY FACTOR

B	A+	A	B+	B	C+	C	D	F
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